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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

25X1A

COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Interior Travel Procedures: Rail, Bus, Air, Freight
Train, TruckPLACE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE) 25X1ADATE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)

DATE (OF INFO.)

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NO. OF PAGES 3

NO. OF ENCLS.

SUPP. TO
REPORT NO.

SOURCE

Rail Travel

1. "Rail travel in Poland presents [late 1953] no insurmountable difficulties for a person having enough money to pay the rather high price of a ticket. A ticket from Warsaw to Gdansk costs 60 zl.; from Warsaw to Krakow 50 zl.; from Gdansk to Katowice 90 zl.; from Gdansk to Krakow 100 zl. No documents or authorizations are required to buy a ticket unless one wishes to buy it at a reduced rate.
2. "All trains are always full to capacity (and over). The carriages are old and dirty, with the exception of those on a few international express trains. A person who knows a long time ahead the day he is to travel may buy a seat reservation ticket along with his ordinary ticket. In order to get a reservation he must do this several weeks before his journey. There are few carriages with numbered seats and also very few sleeping cars. The trains between Warsaw and Krakow and Warsaw and Gdynia have only one sleeping car each. The third class sleeping cars are reserved a long time in advance. It is slightly easier to get a place in a second class sleeping car although there, too, the majority of places are reserved for all sorts of functionaries travelling on official business.
3. "The tickets are bought at ticket offices at the railway station. There are no special windows for special categories of travellers. Persons travelling on official business have priority and need not stand in queue with the others. Another way to buy a ticket is at the Orbis travel bureau which has offices in all larger towns. In Warsaw there are six Orbis offices, viz., at 16 Ulica Bracka, 31 Ulica Pulawska, 4 Plac Konstytucji, at 45 Aleja Jerozolimska, 10 Plac Inwalidow and at 70 Ulica Targowa in Praga. At the railway station one may buy a ticket only for that same day. Orbis also sells tickets in advance. Persons with a travel order have priority there, too.

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4. "The majority of railway passengers in Poland buy their tickets at the railway stations; they line up two to five hours before the windows are opened. One easier way to get a ticket is to give a porter 10 zł.. He will buy a ticket in a jiffy - going round by some back door and utilizing his connections with the railway officials. The number of tickets sold is limited and corresponds in some way to the capacity of the trains, i.e., the trains manage to hold the ticket holders but naturally far from provide seats for everybody. To get a seat is considered a piece of luck. A traveller is pleased if he can get standing room in a passage.
5. "The tickets are checked by uniformed railway officials at the entrances to the platforms. Furthermore, they are checked once by the conductor on the train. One conductor attends to two or three carriages. The checking takes quite a long time because when anyone travels at a reduced price (and many people do) the conductor also looks at all the documents entitling that person to a reduction. The passengers who have paid the full price of a ticket are not required to produce their documents.
6. "If anyone has not been able to buy a ticket at the station and has boarded the train - this can happen only at small stations where there is no ticket check at the platform entrance - he may buy a ticket from the conductor at the full price, without any reductions. A small fine of a few złoty is added to the price of the ticket in such cases.
7. "On arrival the passengers must give up their tickets when leaving the railway station.
8. "Following is the schedule for the most important railway lines:

Polish Railways

Main Line Schedules [no date given]

(Ex = Express Train
P = Passenger Train)

A	P	P	P	Ex	P	↓ Warsaw ↓ Krakow	P	P	P	P	Ex
	0:20 7:50	9:20 17:22	13:55 22:26	17:10 22:56	22:02 5:03		5:13 22:13	8:49 0:39	16:58 8:37	23:56 15:43	22:04 16:13
B	P	Ex	P	Ex	Ex	↓ Warsaw ↓ Katowice	Ex	P	Ex	Ex	P
	9:05 17:10	15:00 20:29	15:08 22:21	17:25 22:34	23:20 4:50		7:45 1:30	14:22 6:29	15:16 9:50	23:05 18:01	5:30 23:18
C	P	P	Ex	P	Ex	↓ Warsaw ↓ Gdynia	P	P	Ex	P	Ex
	10:15 18:00	14:05 22:23	18:00 0:33	19:50 4:49	23:45 8:43		9:20 0:14	16:04 8:35	20:46 14:18	4:35 20:48	8:28 3:20
D		P	Ex	Ex		↓ Warsaw ↓ Wroclaw	P	Ex	Ex		
		7:40 16:37	21:30 4:34	22:30 5:31			21:28 12:19	5:20 22:05	8:18 0:37		
E		P	Ex	Ex		↓ Warsaw ↓ Szczecin	P	Ex	Ex		
		14:50 3:01	18:45 4:15	23:50 8:52			4:08 15:40	6:18 19:52	7:59 22:32		

Pers.

F.	0:36	↓ Krakow ↓ Katowice ↓ Wroclaw ↓ Poznan ↓ Szczecin	5:15
	2:17		3:44
	5:44		0:10
	8:50		21:01
	12:45		16:54

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Bus Travel

9. "Bus travel is not in wide use in Poland. As a rule the buses traffic short local lines only. There are few long-distance interurban bus lines. Only about 30 short-distance bus lines have Warsaw as their starting point and only five to seven bus lines travel more than 75 km. In Warsaw the central bus station is on Aleja Jerozolimaska in a large wooden building.
10. "All bus lines are managed by the State Motor Communications (Panstwowa Komunikacja Samochodowa). Bus tickets generally cost twice as much as the equivalent railway fare. The main lines from Warsaw go to Radom, Plock, Makow and Bialobrzegi.
11. "There is no document check whatsoever when one buys a bus ticket. Only those persons who order a ticket in advance mention their names. Persons buying their tickets on the day of departure do not do this, but few leave the purchase of tickets to the last. That would mean running the risk of not getting a ticket as only as many tickets are sold as there are seats in the bus.
12. "The bus drivers keep lists of passengers.

Air Travel

13. "Air lines exist between all large towns in Poland. To get a ticket for a plane is comparatively easier than for a train because air travel is more expensive, - averaging 150 per cent of the railway fare. Officials with travel orders get a reduction in price [source does not know how large].
14. "Two years ago [1951] in order to protect the planes against coups organized by the passengers, the practice was introduced of having an armed secret UB agent sit among the passengers disguised as one of them. The doors of the pilots' cabin are also locked on the inside and cannot be opened by the passengers. Whether the UB agents travel on all lines to this day I do not know. In 1953 one more precaution was introduced, viz., checking points on the ground per every 15 minutes of a plane's route; the check points report to headquarters as soon as a plane gets off schedule.
15. "A person buying a plane ticket must give his name. The ticket office usually asks him to produce his identity card to see whether he is speaking the truth.
16. "To travel abroad - whether to a Satellite country or to the West - a person must have a valid foreign passport with all the necessary visas. On the airfield there is the usual check of the passport and the luggage - in the same way that is customary in all countries. Persons whose passports are in order do not meet any additional difficulties.

Freight Train Travel

17. "Although the passenger trains are overcrowded people in Poland do not travel on freight trains. This is forbidden. A person doing so may be suspected of planning some sort of sabotage - and it is most unhealthy to arouse such suspicion. However, it is possible that the guards of a freight train let a friend travel on it in order to save the railway fare, but this would be an exceptional thing.

Truck Travel

18. "It happens more often that the driver of a truck lets a friend ride on it, but officially, this, too, is forbidden."

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